



Mabel Barrison, Anna Held and Fritzi Scheff In New Plays



From Our New York Dramatic Correspondent.

THE arrival of the holiday season has, as usual, been marked by the production of a large number of new plays, and it so happens that the dramatic put on at this time this year exhibit a wide range in subject and regrettably in quality also.

"The Blue Mouse," at the Lyric theater, a Clyde Fitch adaptation, is one of the new vehicles, and its cast is thoroughly well balanced, including Mabel Barrison in the title role, Jameson Lee Finney, Jane Laurel, Charles Dickson and others.

"The Blue Mouse" has enjoyed a long run abroad. In Berlin it has continued for more than a year. Mr. Fitch adapted it from the German of Alexander Engel and Julius Horst, and the critics have praised the adaptation so profusely as to guarantee it a long career of money making. In short, "The Blue Mouse" has not a blue moment in it, and the performance of the company makes it the best musical comedy of the season thus far.

As Paulette Divine, Mabel Barrison has a role that cannot fail to appreciably advance her reputation as a star in the "legitimate," for its opportunities for effective characterization are by no means few.

"The Blue Mouse" deals with the adventures of a young man, Augustus Rollett, who hires Paulette Divine, a Salome dancer, known as "The Blue Mouse," to impersonate his wife in order to deceive his employer, Mr. Jewell, president of the New York Interstate railroad.

Young Mr. Rollett seeks advancement in the employ of the company and discovers that the president enjoys the excitement of harmless flirtations with young women.

Subsequent events entangle "The Blue Mouse," Mr. Rollett, Mrs. Rollett, her old father, Mr. Jewell, and Mrs. Jewell in an extraordinary series of events, the solution of which arrives only at the very end of the last act.

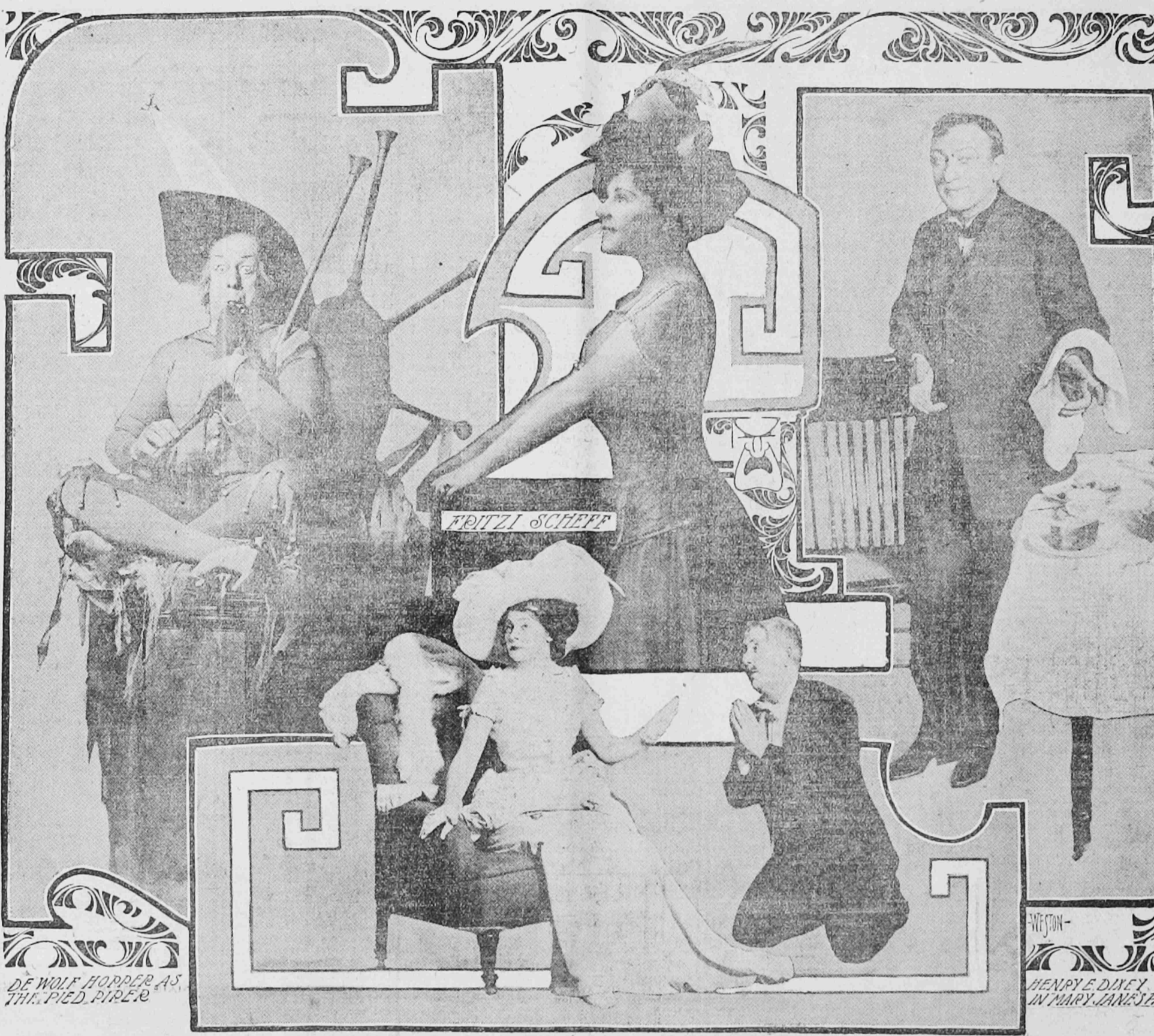
A Racy Character.

Miss Barrison's Paulette is a racy character, breezy, refreshing and extremely practical, even for a Salome with New York habits. But Paulette combines the sympathetic and the practical in somewhat spasmodic fashion. Anxious to help a struggling going author, who, like the company, needed the money, Paulette was enabling the play to earn, she remarked: "Say, I've got an awful nice manager. He don't care how bum the show is."

Somebody's father came to town from the "way back" section. He conversed with Paulette for he was an aged child seeking to learn the wisdom of the young. He gazed on a picture of Paulette and stood in amazement, gasping at the scantiness of the costume.

"Say, lady, on the level," he choked, "claudelude." "How did you dare?" "Oh," responds the innocent Paulette in cheerful manner, "I didn't mind it. The stage was steam heated."

That work of art, along with other riches of Paulette's flat, added to the interest of a professional auction at which champagne was served and an orchestra played in the bathroom. It was explained that friends who had sent Paulette gifts would hustle



MABEL BARRISON AND CHARLES DICKSON IN "THE BLUE MOUSE"

around to buy them back at advance prices.

But funnier than the auction was the last scene, in which Paulette put on a kimono in the secretary's home, and then when she had taken it off again put on an injured air because first one and then another refused to take the risk of buttoning her up the back. Miss Barrison was so helplessly human that she caused screams of laughter.

"Miss Innocence" is the alluring title of a new play by Harry B. Smith and Ludwig Engländer. On reading the title it is seen at once that only the unsophisticated Anna Held could play the title role. And she does. Her recent opening at the New York theater was successful, as well it might be with a strong cast supporting Miss Held that included Charles A. Biegow, Lawrence D'Orsay and unique Emma Janvier.

Miss Held's eyes and figure are surrounded during the performance by a galaxy of beautiful nymphs in the guise of chorus girls, by scenic splendors and gorgeous gowns.

The play tells about an innocent schoolgirl taken to Paris in search of her parents. Just why Paris should have a perfectly innocent girl inflicted on it no one in the play attempts to explain.

However, Miss Innocence, who is, of course, none other than the demurely expressive Miss Held, tries to "square" herself with Paris by singing in most entertaining manner a song entitled "I want to be naughty too."

Charles Biegow, as "the greatest detective in the world," succeeds in backing Sherlock Holmes "completely off the boards," to use horse racing vernacular.

Other new productions are Fritzi Scheff in "The Prima Donna," Knickerbocker theater, and Henry E. Dixey in "Mary Jane's Pa," Garden theater, and De Wolf Hopper in "The Pied Piper," at the Majestic.

Miss Scheff appears at her very best in her new opera by Victor Herbert and Henry Blossom, which tells how an opera singer meets, loves and marries an army officer.

Collier as a Stage Director.

William Collier had everything to do with the staging of "The Patriot." He wrote most of the play, chose the scenery, the properties, hired many of the actors and then rehearsed them night and day. His weapon for obtaining results and hard work is sarcasm. An actor inadvertently speaks a line that has been discarded from the manuscript. It throws out everybody on the stage, and the action stops. But Mr. Collier does not fly into a fury. He quietly approaches the trembling offender and says with funeral seriousness: "You like that line, don't you? Well, as the author of the play I suppose I should feel flattered, but I am not. We cut that line out three weeks ago. Can't you see it doesn't fit in, or are you so fond of it that you are going to make it fit anyway? If you must have it, take it, bring it home with you, sing it, eat it" (with wild gesticulations), "hand it down to your children. I won't call you a plagiarist, but I will call you something worse if I ever hear you speak that line again."

FREDERICK TREGELLES.

Battling Nelson a Cowardly Champion—Timely Talk of Sport; Britisher Welsh, Lightweight Fighter of Promise—1909 Football Plans

A BURNING question in the pugilistic arena just now is "Who will be the next man to meet Battling Nelson?"

Nelson's hold on the lightweight championship title is about as tight as that of any man who has ever had it—if not more so. There doesn't seem to be any man in sight having the power to endanger the Dane's stewardship, and he is confident of becoming the Jeffries of his class—that is, the Battler aspires to the position where no one will want to meet him for fear of encountering lifelong injury, and on obtaining that position he will, like Jeffries, gracefully, not to say wisely, retire, making some one a gift of the premiership-honor.

The English lad, Fred Welsh, vanquisher of Abe Attell, has agreed to fight Nelson provided the latter's willingness to sign the necessary papers is forthcoming.

Welsh has agreed with Jim Jeffries, now a California fight promoter, to fight forty-five rounds with Nelson at Los Angeles at the Jeffries Athletic club.

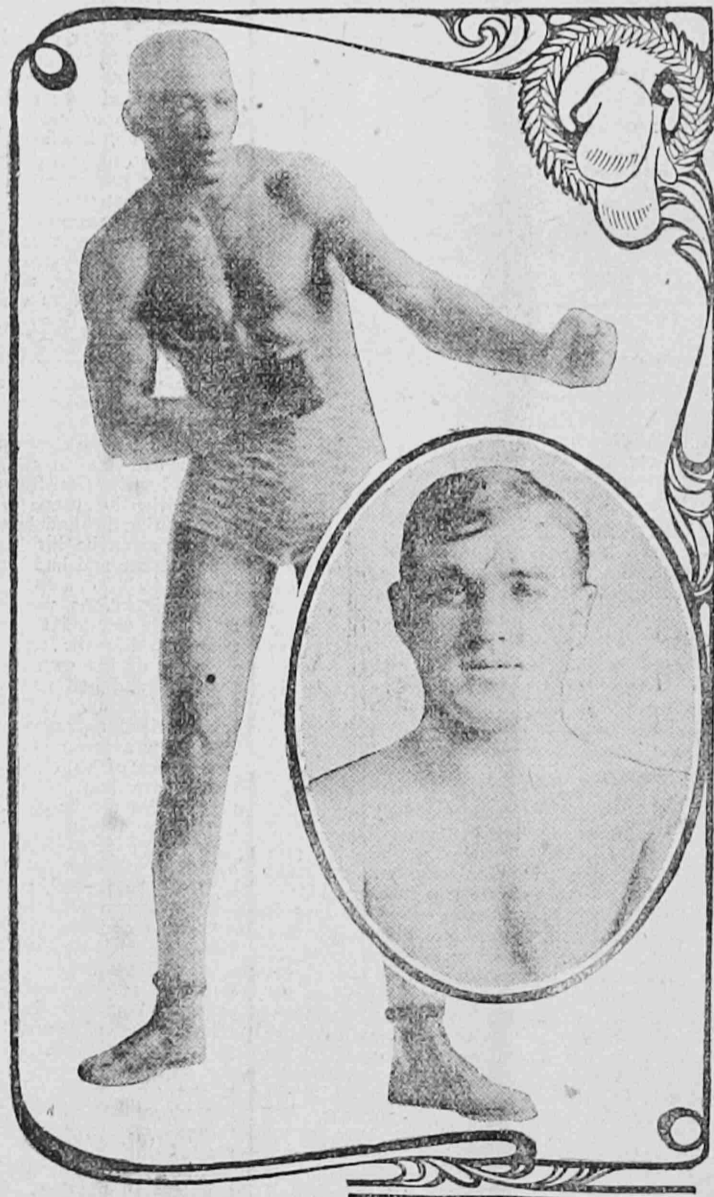
Nelson has got quite in the habit of

refusing offers of matches, feeling that he is entitled to make as much money out of his hard won honor via the theatrical and exhibition route as any other champion of the past. He is correct in arguing that McGovern, Dixon and Gans never overlooked the practical side of the game when they were the title holders.

Welsh, by the way, is every inch a scrapper, and American critics state that his style is most effective and up to date. That he has won the respect of the fight world is shown by the refusal of Joe Gans to take on Welsh for a twenty-five round match in Los Angeles.

Gans Feared Welsh.

The English lad made the definite offer to Gans, and after due consideration the ex-champion turned it down. Gans expressed to his intimate friends the fear that he would not be able to stay in the ring in his present condition for twenty-five rounds against so fast a man as young Welsh, who not only has speed in hitting and in leg work, but who has developed unusual punching ability as regards heaviness of blows for a man of his size. Welsh



JACK JOHNSON.

TOMMY BURNS.

PRINCIPALS IN CHAMPIONSHIP HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHT IN AUSTRALIA.

can make things lively for any man in the lightweight division.

When Welsh announced his willingness to meet Nelson, the Battler quickly issued a statement that he would not meet any one until spring, because "these near fighters aren't entitled to a bout with me, and so I will take my time about granting them any favors." But "these near fighters," as Nelson styles Welsh and others, have public opinion on their side, which public opinion demands that Nelson should stop talking and do some fighting.

Nelson as a Dodger.

Feeling, however, that Nelson will continue to dodge him for a time anyway, Welsh has taken on Puckey McFarland for a New Year's day match at Corroth's arena, San Francisco, the men to weigh in at 133 pounds at 9 o'clock in the morning.

McFarland and Welsh have met before. Puckey defeated the Briton in a ten round bout at Milwaukee, but their next encounter, a twenty-five round affair, terminated in a draw.

If Welsh should wallop McFarland, Battling Nelson will have a difficult task in giving the public a satisfactory explanation of further delay in signing with Welsh.

Long Schoolboy Tour.

A trip is being contemplated by the football authorities of the Englewood High school of Chicago that is the talk of the middle western scholastic world. Arrangements have been completed for three games for the Englewood High school eleven, and all that is now needed is the consent of the schoolboys players' parents. Butte, Mont., has offered a guarantee of \$1,700 and will receive the opening date should the proposed trip materialize. Los Angeles, Cal., is expected to give \$1,600 and Seattle \$1,000.

Football News For 1909.

After an interval of several years Chicago and Northwestern will clash on the gridiron next fall. Directors Stagg and Gillesby of these two institutions have been in conference, and it is said that a game is assured to be an early season contest to be played probably at the Midway. Chicago and Northwestern met last in football in 1905, when the maroon triumphed by a 22 to 0 score. Before that Chicago had won ten games and Northwestern had won five.

Walter Steffen, captain and quarterback of the Chicago football team this season, will probably be engaged to coach the Wabash eleven next fall. Business men who are interested in the success of Wabash on the gridiron are reported to have pledged \$500 toward paying a salary for Steffen if he can be induced to sign a contract.

Next Gold Cup Auto Race.

There is a feeling among automobilists that Savannah has won the right to the next gold cup contest by reason of the splendid success of the recent races. The drivers are unanimous in declaring the course and all local conditions ideal for international competition.

The peace agreement between the Automobile Club of America and the American Automobile association, however, stands in the way of awarding to Savannah the next international race, for by the agreement all future races for the Grand Prize must be held on the Long Island (New York) motor parkway. There is a general sentiment, however, that some great contest should be arranged for Savannah for next Thanksgiving day in recognition of the splendid manner in which the race recently was conducted.

Carl Neumaier, a director of the Benz company of Mannheim, Germany, lodged a protest with Robert Lee Morrell, chairman of the Automobile Club of America contest committee, against the awarding of the place to Nazario on the ground that the latter received outside assistance in changing a tire. This assistance was alleged to have been given on the last lap, when several of the millionaires guarding the course are said to have helped the crew in raising the car when a jack beneath it sank into the sand.

Bothner's Lost Wrestling Title.

America lost another championship when Eugene Tremblay of Canada defeated George Bothner, champion lightweight wrestler of America, two falls in three, catch-as-catch-can style. The bout, which was held at Prospect hall, Brooklyn, attracted a big crowd and was keenly fought.

HARRY GRANT.



GUARDING THE GOAL.

NEW YORK ATHLETIC CLUB ICE HOCKEY PLAYERS IN PRACTICE.

GOSSIP OF THE STAGE.

Miss Eugenia Thais Lawton, who has been engaged in stock work in Boston and San Francisco, will play the leading feminine role in "The Great Divide," with Henry Miller.

Louise Mann is to appear in a comedy by Mme. Fred de Gresac and also in a play by Charles Nirdlinger. The latter

is a sort of modern Don Quixote character.

Thomas Wise, who is starring in "A Gentleman From Mississippi," may appear as Falstaff in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

Charles Frohman has a new comedy in which he intends to star Joseph

Coyne and Alexandra Carlisle, who have been appearing in "The Mollusc."

The Shuberts are to produce a grand opera by Harry B. Smith and Reginald De Koven. The opera will be produced next September.

Virginia Harried is writing a "four act play."

An operetta is running in New York with the same title as William Col-

lier's play, "The Patriot." The operetta has Washington for one of its characters.

William Morris has been engaged for the leading comedy role in "The Soul Kiss," with Adeline Genece.

The Brownson Howard plays have been placed in the market for stock companies or for tours.

"The Melting Pot" will be kept on

tour till a suitable opening is secured in New York.

William Norris has joined Hattie Williams' company.

Seymour Hicks has turned "The Dictator" into a musical play and will produce it in London in that shape.

Walter Perkins will succeed John C. Slavin in "A Knight For a Day."

A second company is to be organized

to play "The Traveling Salesman" on the road.

Frederick Lewis has joined the company supporting Wilton Lackaye.

In "Man and Superman" as seen in England and America there was a vast difference. In this country the third act was never played, and, according to Miss Donnelly, the effort

lost much of its charm. Miss Donnelly

is known as an ardent admirer of Mr. Shaw. She originated in this country the role of Candida and also the part of the lady in "The Man of the Hour."

In both of these she had the advantage of being coached by the author while a guest at his country place in Ireland during her vacation.

A new play by Della Clark is called "The White Squaw."



A CURLER IN ACTION—LAKE CHAMPLAIN.